

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON WESTERN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN JAPAN

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### *Introduction*

The accomplishments of anthropological and related behavior science research on Japan by Westerners are better than one might expect considering the recency of the effort and the language handicaps, but poorer considering the capabilities of Western social science. Social research on Japan has emphasized microsocial phenomena, neglected the larger society and its changes, and has not yet made significant contributions to social and cultural theory.

A major reason for these limitations is that the accelerated modernization of Japanese society has confronted anthropologists with a familiar dilemma. On the one hand, the need to understand an exotic culture is pressing, and the anthropological skills for such an endeavor are available. On the other hand, the increasing national integration and urbanization of Japanese society and culture make traditional anthropological methods unsuited to the task of studying the whole society and its changes. The same problem exists for the study of China (Maurice Freedman 1963) and the United States.

Although Western anthropologists have studied Amerinds and African and Oceanic peoples for three generations or more, the first serious anthropological study done by a Westerner in Japan was John Embree's *Suye Mura* published in 1939. In some ways it is regrettable that this pioneer undertaking took the form of a village study, in the familiar manner of the tribal ethnography, since it set a pattern for anthropological research on Japan after World War II. However, Western anthropologists really knew nothing about Japan and one way to begin finding out was to live in Japanese communities for a while. Thus the community studies made by Beardsley, Cornell, Norbeck, Grad, Robert Smith (see references), and others made their distinctive contribution. The most imposing single piece of research carried out by the Occupation's Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division also took the form of village studies, a book on thirteen rural communities (Arthur Raper et al 1950). Their effort was directed toward a practical study of the effects of rural reforms on representative communities. In contrast with later academic studies, a large sector of Japanese society was brought into view. The sociological and economic elements in Raper's

project led the collective enterprise away from classical anthropological models concerned with small-scale cultural wholes.

Research by other behavior science disciplines is also recent. Sociopsychological work on Japan today is founded on attitude survey techniques developed in Japan during the Occupation and extended into the universities after the Occupation ended (Passin 1951). Psychocultural studies, begun originally by anthropologists during World War II, have moved out of the hands of these professionals in part because of the bad reputé of some of the early studies (Norbeck and DeVos 1961). Various collaborative efforts by Japanese and American psychiatrists and psychologists have emerged in the past decade: a few anthropologists, such as Betty Lanham, continue to work in the field. Cultural pattern research began with Benedict, received an infusion of interpretive analysis of the David Riesman type in the early 1950's in the *Shiso no Kagaku* movement (Kawashima 1951; Tsurumi 1954; Kato 1959), and has come along slowly since then. A few subjects, notably the studies of *buraku* structure, received an impressive impetus in the late 1950's when Western anthropologists began using the earlier work of Japanese scholars going back into the 1930's. The same can be said for some aspects of family social anthropology, hierarchical social structures, and exotic items like prostitution, Shinto rites, and everyday humor. But this prewar work did not loom very large, and Western behavior scientists, as well as their Japanese colleagues, had to construct a science of Japanese society and culture in the 1950's.

Since that time, the field has developed along predictable lines: nearly all standard subjects of contemporary sociocultural anthropology are represented by research on Japan, with certain fields predominating. These standard subjects are listed in rough order according to the number of items in some standard bibliographies checked by the writer: (1) kinship, family, and related aspects of social relations, and special-function groups based on kinship role models; (2) community studies, particularly rural communities; (3) psychocultural studies of several types, usually done in collaboration with psychologists; (4) research on any topic featuring linguistic or semantic analysis; and (5) all others. This hierarchy probably conforms with the anthropological order of professional preference for topics during the 1950's and early 1960's.

This introduction would be incomplete without noting the relationships among the several behavior science disciplines. Sociology is identified as customarily dealing in broad, transcommunity frames of reference whereas anthropology characteristically displays a narrower focus. This difference is apparent in studies on Japan. Psychology is oriented toward the study of individuals, but psychological research in Japan in the past decade has shown an increasing awareness of sociocultural frames, and in the valuable

work on Japanese achievement training and motivation has assumed an anthropological scope and cogency.

A special problem of disciplinary relationships exists with respect to the work of Japanese scholars. Japanese sociologists (e.g., Sasaki 1969) claim jurisdiction over kinship (*dozoku*) studies and the community study tradition (as represented by Fukutake and Suzuki, for example), while Americans and some Japanese social anthropologists claim that these two fields of research are anthropology. Thus it is impossible to discuss anthropological work on Japan without referring to other disciplines. A Japanese social anthropologist can study kinship abroad and have the work regarded as anthropology, but if he does the same kind of research in a Japanese village it will be sociology (see Sofue 1969). The reason for this situation is that social anthropology is a postwar phenomenon in Japan; before World War II, social anthropological studies were fostered by sociology.

#### *Behavior Science and Institutional Social Science*

In contrast with the recency of the effort in behavior science stands the work of historians, economists, and political scientists. Three generations of Westerners and their Japanese colleagues wrote on Japanese social, political, and culture history; writings in economic history and development have a duration of two generations. These fields thus have an impressive scholarly backlog; problems have been patiently pursued and replicated for many years, and whole bodies of interpretive thought about the nature of Japanese society and polity have emerged. The work was carried on by distinguished amateurs as well as professionals; the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* contain many examples. Some of the best scholarship in the *Transactions* is anthropological in the sense of being the folkloristic study of customs and ideas (e.g., Casal 1940), a field no longer especially popular in anthropology and already passé by the late 1940's. Among contemporary Western scholars, Marvin Opler, Edward Norbeck, and Douglas Haring have carried on the tradition; among the Japanese, Eichiro Ishida (see references).

The question is whether or not the work of behavior scientists can, or should, accumulate in the manner evident for other disciplines mentioned above. The topics covered by behavior scientists are much more heterogeneous: they often exhibit a tendency to set forth into little-known by-ways, and whole subjects are abandoned along the way. Will anyone further explore the topic of leisure after Plath (1964)? Have DeVos and Mizushima (1967) said all there is to say about gangs? Will a continuing study of migration differentials be made by sociologists and social anthropologists? Some topics *are* being followed up: the *buraku*, kinship and descent, nepotism and occupational opportunities, achievement orientations. However, such topics are mostly within sociological or sociopsychological frames of refer-

ence, whether they are pursued by anthropologists or scholars of other disciplines.

The recently-published volumes on the Bermuda conferences on modern Japan provide an opportunity for checking mutual relationships among the two broad categories of academics engaged in the study of Japanese society. In the economics volume, *The State and Economic Enterprise* (Lockwood, ed. 1965), two anthropologists and seven sociologists are cited. All nine citations are to works on Japan. In the volume of studies on *Political Development* (Ward, ed. 1968), twelve behavior scientists are cited. Of these, five anthropologists and three sociologists specialize in the study of Japan; the remaining three sociologists and one anthropologist are not Japan specialists.

In *Aspects of Social Change* (Dore, ed. 1967), fifty-one historians, political scientists, and economists are cited. (This count is conservative; at least ten borderline cases were omitted.) Twenty-eight were authors of works on Japan, and twenty-three wrote on topics other than Japan.

The considerable disparity between the behavior science volume and the other two suggests that although economists, political scientists, and historians can write meaningfully about Japan without detailed reference to the work of behavior scientists, the converse is not true. It can be argued that the difference may be due to the greater backlog in the former fields, and to the relatively unspecialized nature of the behavior science effort as a whole: it covers a much wider range of topics and therefore properly engages in a more detailed search of the entire body of literature on Japanese society.

However, we may also observe that most of the fifty-one citations in the Dore volume concerned studies of the nation or society as a whole. As a body, these writings command respect and constitute an imposing, and also embarrassing, standard for the behavior scientist working in the Japan field. The microsocial focus of so much of the behavior science effort has required that the work of the other scholars be brought in when statements are made about the national entity.

Very few studies by anthropologists are based on historical documents. Robert J. Smith's reconstruction of "pre-industrial urbanism" (1960), R. P. Dore's study of Meiji agriculture (1960), and Harumi Befu's study of village autonomy (1968) are three outstanding examples. In all cases problems deriving from anthropological frames are dealt with on the basis of historical materials, thereby shedding considerable light on contemporary society. However, these studies would have difficulty meeting the standards set by economic historian Thomas C. Smith (1959) on the role of rural society in recent Japanese history, or political historian John Hall's work on the castle town (1955 and 1968). Such studies by historians could benefit from anthropology's more analytical formulations of problems, but anthropolo-

gists need to demonstrate more sophistication in handling Japanese historical data before they can command respect and emulation.

Although anthropology generally has difficulty in accepting historical data, as we have noted, anthropologists studying Japan have used such materials extensively as a foundation for studies of contemporary Japan. The problems and modes of anthropological research emphasize field work and face-to-face contact between researchers and living subjects. In dealing with a society of large scale and a well-documented past, the anthropologist is at a disadvantage when compared with the historian, and at an advantage when compared with the ethnologist studying tribal society.

### *The Microsocial Focus*

The most general statement one can make about the anthropological and other behavior science literature on Japan is that it is dominantly concerned with contemporary microsocial phenomena: studies of communities, special groups, and segments of society; particular cultural patterns, slices of behavior, and psycho-social-linguistic concepts; and particular patterns of social relationships and social processes. These studies of parts of the whole, if synthesized, provide a basic ethnography of Japan. Microsocial research is not usually concerned with the nation or the society as a whole, but some cultural phenomena investigated in the studies of Japan do attain a national representativeness. Ruth Benedict's famous book is in this latter class, as are Takeo Doi's studies (1956; 1962) of *amaeru* and similar psycholinguistic phenomena. Considering their immense possibilities, detailed semantic studies on the Japanese language, either informal or with disciplined methods, have been surprisingly few (Passin 1966). Dore's (1959) and Vogel's (1963) use of the urban community and the "new middle class" to observe trends in the national society are also attempts to use segmental studies for more comprehensive ends. Abegglen's perhaps overly-well-known book on "the" factory is a classic example (1958).

The basic problem confronted by anthropologists and many other behavior scientists interested in large social entities is how to attain true representativeness. In anthropology, the community study has been criticized as not being relevant to problems of trans-community magnitude. The methodological problem has become increasingly important because of the growing relationships among all units of society, and the increasing need for people to consider external forces and institutions in their adaptations to local conditions. Anthropologists see two solutions to the methodological problem of gaining representativeness: (1) to select for study larger or more comprehensively typical units (i.e., regions instead of communities) and study these so far as possible in the classical participative manner; or (2) shift toward the methods of sociologists and institutional social scientists and study true samples of the national society and, where possible, back



up these investigations with intensive studies of typical segmental units selected by national sampling.

I am not suggesting that anthropologists seriously attempt to record the entire behavioral profile of Japanese life. But I am implying that more care could be given to the *selection* of part-phenomena for study so that the results are of greater significance or representativeness. Key patterns of social relations could be studied in several social contexts, not just one. Studies like Nakane's and Befu's (see references) of the relations between blood kinship and economic phenomena could be extended to social segments that are not rural. Although a number of studies of hierarchical authority patterns have been produced, these are often done by using different conceptual schemes (e.g., compare Bennett and Ishino 1963 with DeVos and Mizushima 1967), and comparison is difficult.

Sociologists or anthropologists writing in the sociological frame have done much better at representing the nation. Sociology has a traditional concern for the largest, not the smallest, social units. The sociological approach is, in fact, that approach in the behavior sciences which seeks to know the social whole—despite anthropology's well-known claim to be the science of *cultural* wholes. Anthropology's definition of the "whole" is based on the concept of an integrated tribal culture, and this form of human behavior is ambiguously present in large complex social systems.

Therefore such studies as Dore's of a Tokyo ward (1959) and Vogel's on the middle class, Koyama on family (1962), or Norbeck on associations (1967), aim at more comprehensive statements. They often succeed because the sociological approach focuses on phenomena with universal significance: stratification, achievement, urbanization, migration, mobility, and democratic interaction. All of these processes affect the national entity and often operate in the various social segments or microsocial realms with sufficient sameness and regularity to make findings appropriate to one or two segments roughly representative of the whole.

Sociopsychological research on Japanese society stands roughly in the middle between the anthropological and sociological modes. DeVos, Wagatsuma, Doi, and Mizushima (see references) address themselves to topics of large magnitude—achievement, hierarchy, anxiety. But they often study these topics in an "anthropological" context, that is, as microsocial segments. These segments are chosen partly for ease of management, and partly because of the same curiosity about unknown or obscure social phenomena that guides the work of many anthropologists.

The most impressive single category of Western anthropological research on Japan, kinship and family studies, not only reflects the deep interest in this subject during the 1950's but also is based solidly on Japanese rural ethnological investigations (e.g., Fukutake 1967; Nagai 1953, reporting

K. Ariga's classic work; Okada 1952). Therefore in this sphere of endeavor, continuity in the Western anthropological study of Japan extends back beyond Embree's book. Both American and Japanese studies of family and kinship contribute to the understanding of kinship and also show the wider implications of familial kinship roles in economic and political sectors of Japanese society. Thus kinship studies imply a theory of the relationship of micro- to macrosocial phenomena, but on the whole this theory has remained undeveloped and anthropologists have been more concerned with kinship and family per se than with its symbolic extensions and bridging functions in secondary institutions.

I do not mean to ignore the serious practical problems attending research on large social entities. One reason why anthropological studies on Japan have been limited in scope and representativeness is that money which would ordinarily be used in actual research operations must be used for travel to Japan and expenses in the country. Since research funds for "area studies" are becoming scarce, opportunities for productive work have greatly contracted. Japanese anthropologists face extreme shortages of funds for research of any kind. This situation tends to select people interested in small-scale studies or documentary work, often on the past. The only large-scale attempt to use expensive teamwork in the study of Japanese society from an anthropological perspective was the work of the *Michigan Center for Japanese Studies* in Okayama. This effort was made possible in large part by the much lower costs prevailing in the late 1940's and early 1950's. However, the work did not really provide general knowledge of Japan because the conceptions guiding the study remained on the level of community studies (Beardsley 1959).

Anthropological studies of large sectors of Japanese society must be done using a consistent theoretical perspective and appropriate methodologies. Anthropology as a discipline is only beginning to evolve such a perspective. Julian Steward's notion of "levels of complexity" was considered to be the emerging model for the anthropology of large social entities. However, the rapidly-evolving concepts of adaptive behavior offer more. This approach features coping and problem-solving, with an emphasis on the resources, social and material, that limit and facilitate goal-accomplishment and the order of completeness of the cultural profile. The approach has not been tried on Japanese data, although certain studies, such as Cornell's and Wagatsuma's dealing with the *burakumin* (Cornell 1967), are moving in this direction.

### *Change*

The manner in which anthropological students of Japan have analyzed the problem of change has by and large been on an institutional level. Change has been visualized as a process of alteration of preindustrial

patterns of feudal and familial communalism under the stimulus of Western ideas and practices exemplified by industrialism, technology, urbanization, and democracy. This generalized view of change is consistent with the major thrust of Western social-science work on modernization and Westernization which, since the time of Max Weber, has viewed the world from Western perspectives of stability and change.

This view of change is by no means entirely false, but it is inadequate to handle all the Japanese facts. In the first place, the efficiency of Japan's transformation was due in large part to the preexisting social system. Thus, the effectiveness of urbanization in Japan was due as much to preexisting patterns of urban life and rural-urban relations as to any borrowing of Western concepts of urbanism. Similarly, the success of the family system in accommodating itself to change was attributable as much to its own structure as to any changes introduced from abroad, or to any necessary alterations made subsequent to industrialization. The use of kin roles as models for instrumental action was a "feudal" custom that greatly facilitated institutional growth (Ishino 1953).

Some of the microsocial phenomena of special interest to anthropologists, moreover, have been either resistive to change, accommodative of change, indifferent, or neutral. The current debate over the role of kinship and family illustrates the problems that arise when microsocial phenomena are introduced into the argument, especially without clear acknowledgement of the time factor. Vogel (1963) attributes the loosening of the postwar family structure to legal changes in the Family Code, but Koyama (1962) regards these same changes as prolongations of trends begun a long time ago and based on industrialization and democratization. Matsumoto (1962) and others tend to see little change and instead call attention to the persistence of traditional husband-wife roles and persisting features of *dozoku* relations. The same debate waxes over the issue of changes in the village community: Namiki (1960) sees change taking place; Fukutake (1962b) deplores the persisting sameness but has recently (1967) modified his position.

What is needed is a theory of change in the context of the relation of micro- to macrosocial phenomena in a historical context. In general, such a theory will necessarily take into account the distinctive forms of networks of national social structure that have been part of the Japanese social heritage since mid-Tokugawa times. This will require an alteration of the view of Japan as undergoing wholesale change toward Western models or, where such change is not visible, retaining "traditional" patterns. There is needed, *first*, a concept of change as relative to the distinctive contemporary social problems as the Japanese themselves define them. The modification by communal social patterns of tensions produced by pressures to conform is an example: these communal features may cushion the development of alienating conditions and thereby become stronger in the process, but at



the same time they may impede rational social reconstruction. Similar trends, with differing historical bases, may be visible in Western nations facing similar problems of alienation.

*Second*, such an approach implies a comparative frame of reference at the same time that it seeks a deeper conception of distinctive Japanese conditions. Sociocultural change is now a world-wide phenomenon: when Japanese students riot, we may be sure that American students will be on the warpath within a week or so; if the Japanese electronics industry needs more young, skilled workers, it is likely that similar or complementary adjustments will be made in American factories. Once again the adaptational frame of reference comes into view: the problem of social change in Japan is a problem of how Japanese, with their social resources, cope with problems common to every industrial nation.

A *third* guideline for a theory of change is provided by studies of the relationship of the structure of social roles to the process of change. The dimensions of this theory have been emerging in behavior science studies of Japanese society for twenty-five years, and a few recent attempts at synthesis have appeared, such as the research on achievement patterns by DeVos (1965). This line of inquiry is productive precisely because it forces the anthropologist to move out and beyond his own specialties and to absorb the theoretical implications of sociological, sociopsychological, and psychiatric research.

One of the more interesting consequences of the view of Japanese society as a dual fabric of Oriental and Western has been the shifts of interest in social science studies themselves. Westerners have been sensitive to the nuances of tradition and modernity in Japanese thinking. When Japan herself was in a mood to revere the past, Western studies emphasized the unchanging traditional character of the society and culture; when Japan turned a "modern" face to the world, the literature tended to emphasize the similarities of Japan and the West. The first mood is represented by Benedict's book; the second by Bellah's. In the 1960's, as Japan herself began looking back to old traditions as a source of identity and stability, many analysts began to emphasize the unchanging character of the society again (see Bennett 1968 for further discussion).

### *Needed Anthropological Research*

What is missing from the roster of available behavior science studies on Japan? In the anthropological area, we lack a study of an agricultural community from the perspective of intensive cultural ecology on the order of Moerman's recent book on Thailand (1968) or Sahlins' earlier work on Moala (1962). We have only a general idea of the time and energy budgets of Japanese agrarians, their adaptive strategies, and the interrelations of resources, labor, and population (see Ishino 1962). Since Japanese agricul-

ture has been undergoing extensive change, it seems such a study is long overdue.

We also lack any published study of a typical *region* in Japan from a geographical or ecological perspective that shows the interrelationships among the various productive niches. Work has been done by Japanese on these problems, although much of it has been practical in orientation. We lack also a really detailed study of the relationships of Japanese localities to the external society and bureaucracy. Here anthropologists have been unwilling to do research on Japan comparable with that done on their own society, despite the current preoccupation with the subject in studies of "peasantry." Only a few such studies have been produced by Westerners, notably the pieces on agricultural change by Ishino and Donohue (1962) and Smith and Reyes (1957), and in greater detail, although specialized, the studies of *buraku* politics by Erwin Johnson (1962).

The legitimate heir of the community study in Japanese society is the study of the relationship between the community microcosm and the macrocosm, via the networks of kinship and friendship, and of the way the local community manages the inputs and constraints emanating from the national society and its organizations. Studies of this type could easily accept the original community focus of analysis but use the community as a point of departure for tracing the influences of the larger society and the way the local people manage these in the pursuit of their ends.

Despite a spate of books by academic reporters and general commentators on the important new religions of Japan (e.g., Thomsen 1963; McFarland 1967), and one new sociopolitical analysis of *Soka Gakkai* (Dator 1969), we lack a full-length study by a professional anthropologist of one or more of these cults and their social and psychological functions. This is all the more curious since anthropologists have shown great interest in revivalistic religions and messianic cults and have produced a number of classic studies of these evidences of alienation under modernizing conditions. We also lack a full-dress study of Japanese poverty groups, although there are two brief accounts (Calderola 1969; Taira 1969).

No anthropologist has published on the sociocultural aspects of megalopolitan trends in Japanese cities and transportation systems, although there are studies of *danchi*, urban neighborhoods, and other segments of urban life with community characteristics. Environmental architects and urban planners such as Richard Meier (1967) interest themselves in the Tokaido megalopolis and its effect on communication, mobility and achievement, but sociologists and anthropologists remain aloof from this subject.

In other words, the most distinctive characteristic of contemporary Japanese national culture—the transformation of social communalism into massness—has had little attention except for such indirect analyses as those by Plath (1964) and Vogel (1963) and some provocative essays by

Japanese intellectuals. Japan presents the unique case of a society with a social system based on preindustrial (though highly developed) patterns that has found these congenial for managing some of the individualizing trends of an industrial society. If there is one key to the analysis of macrocosms in Japan, it is this feature, and the anthropologist making use of it could probably produce the first successful study of culture at the national level.

The study of kinship in rural Japan is probably the subject most thoroughly investigated by scholars in the behavior sciences, at least by anthropologists. Yet there are no detailed studies of kinship in the urban setting or of affiliative networks of rural-urban scope (although every social scientist writing on Japan mentions them) such as those by Schneider (1968) and Firth (1956) of Chicago and London.

### *Training Anthropological Specialists*

The output of Western anthropologists specializing in Japan is not great. A tentative check of universities showed that in the past decade approximately three times as many doctorates in anthropology were awarded to candidates doing research on India and twice as many to candidates studying Thailand and Taiwan (combined). The small output of anthropologists specializing in the study of Japan has at least been steady. Nevertheless, the output does not seem to be in proportion to the contemporary importance of Japan as a modern nation, or to the intellectual significance of Japan as a non-Western example of successful modernization.

There are many reasons for the relative scarcity of Western anthropologists specializing in the study of Japan, of which the difficulty in mastering the language is the most important. At many institutions, such as the writer's own, the teaching of Japanese is less than thorough, and learning the language is in any case a long and frustrating experience. Sufficient competence in the language to permit anthropological fieldwork can seldom be gained in American or European institutions. Prolonged residence in Japan itself is necessary, and such residence doubles or triples the time required for research. Hence, many field studies tend to be brief and yield relatively few data. Most language training programs have an inescapable orientation toward literature and primarily prepare graduate students in history, the institutional social sciences, and art history, fields in which documentary materials are usually more important than a knowledge of colloquial idiom. The lone anthropologist trying to study Japanese in a class full of document readers is at a disadvantage and often gives up in despair.

In spite of much lip-service to the contrary a persistent trend in anthropology has been to favor anthropologists who study tribal societies. It is noticeable that the heyday of anthropological studies of Japan, the 1950's,

produced mainly community studies and research on other traditional anthropological topics; that is, Japanese society was treated in the manner of a tribal or peasant society. The limitations of this type of research have already been discussed. The profession itself has not provided sufficient incentive to induce a significant number of high-caliber students to specialize in the study of national entities.

Still another factor possibly inhibiting the development of the anthropological study of Japan is the modest contribution of the existing studies to theory in anthropology and the social sciences. Probably only two books by behavior scientists dealing with Japan have become part of the modern corpus of general social-science theory: Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, and Bellah's *Tokugawa Religion*. The first was produced by an anthropologist; the second by a sociologist. This is not to deny the contributions at lower levels of theory made by the studies of family and kinship by Befu and others. However, the modesty of the overall theoretical contribution is all the more striking considering the enormous significance of Japan for problems of change and development. Here again, anthropologists have left most of the large-scale work to other scholars.

One result of these inhibiting influences has been the production of many strictly part-time Western Japanologists. After one or two studies, the anthropologist becomes immersed in professional duties or shifts his interest to other topics more easily or cheaply done. Only a few scholars—for example, William Caudill (1959; 1961), who has persistently studied the Japanese mental hospital — have stuck to Japan (although Caudill may or may not be a professional anthropologist!). Thus research is sporadic. Collections of writings, such as Silberman's on culture and personality (1962) and DeVos and Wagatsuma on the *burakumin* (1966), give an impression of greater continuity than actually exists.

What of the Japanese anthropologist? The major thrust of anthropological research in Japan has been toward historical, ethnographic, and biological aspects, and only recently has social anthropology become a major focus. Japanese sociocultural anthropologists, like their Western counterparts, show more interest in foreign cultures than in their own. This is of course a good thing, since in general one does a better job with foreign cultures than with his own. However, it does suggest that Japan as an anthropological topic may be in danger of neglect. Collective research effort, in which Japanese and Western colleagues work together on common problems, has had a modest beginning, and we may hope it will continue.

A fairly consistent theme in these remarks has been the lack of a theory of Japanese society. The lineaments of such a theory are available, but the tendency of both Western and Japanese social scientists to take off from Western theoretical perspectives makes this theory ambiguous and less than explicit. Certain Japanese sociologists recognize the difficulties, and have

been struggling toward articulation of the problems. For example, Sasaki (1969) points out that among available approaches to social theory, Japanese sociologists are ethnocentrically inclined to emphasize structural and organizational determinants of behavior over psychological or individuating because of the emphasis on the group in Japanese society. Perhaps they should not emphasize either approach, but instead should abandon these Western frames of reference in a search for novel and indigenous perspectives.

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